



# **The Poundbury Village Hall Trust**

Charity No: 1086679

## **Trustees' Annual Report & Statement of Financial Activity** for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

May 2025

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**& Statement of Financial Activity**  
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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Charitable Aim and Purposes

The Brownsword Hall was funded by Andrew Brownsword and presented to HRH the Prince of Wales in September 2000, for the use of Poundbury Residents and neighbouring residents in the immediate vicinity.

The day to day management of the Hall, Undercroft and Pummery Square was passed to the Residents of Poundbury and a Trust was formed called the Poundbury Village Hall Trust (PVHT). Up to twelve residents are elected as Trustees at the AGM and form the Management Committee.

The Trust's prime function is to provide a venue for many Poundbury clubs and to be a focus for community activities. In addition the Hall is available for bookings by outside organisations and private individuals.

Hall hire generates income which is used to cover all operating and maintenance costs required to maintain the Hall, Undercroft and Square. Any surplus funds are used to re-invest in the Hall's facilities. Decisions on extraordinary spend and investment are made at the Management Committee Meetings (when quorate: minimum of one third of the trustees in attendance) by a simple majority of the votes cast.

## 2. Objectives & Achievements

### 2.1 Outcomes for the year

#### Hall Use

The objective of the Charitable Trust is to operate a Village Hall that may be used by clubs and organisations as well as private hire for birthdays and celebrations. The Management Committee tries to encourage a wide range of interesting activities that are available for members of the public to attend. Fitness classes have always been popular, particularly Line Dancing (that has 3 Classes in the Hall) but also lower impact chair based exercises and Pilates and yoga. A Slimming World group meet weekly, Art Classes and Camera Club, and new to the Hall a Bridge Club and Choir, all using the Hall during the day or evenings.

78% of Hall use is by Regular Users and this provides a stable income for the Trust. All the clubs and organisations need attendees to generate income to cover the cost of Hall hire, and the Trustees try to ensure the hire charges are both aligned with the market rate and also cover the running costs of the Hall.

In addition the Hall may be booked privately either by businesses (3%), for meetings or training sessions, or by Charities and Private hire (19%) for fund raising events, parties, celebrations, wakes or weddings.

Hall use during this financial period was slightly down compared with previous years, however since Jan 2025 Hall occupancy has risen again to its highest level on record.

#### Hall Maintenance and Safety & Security.

The Management Committee ensures that all Fire Risks Assessments, Health and Safety Reviews, GDPR UK and Safe Guarding policies are in place, as well as fire and smoke alarms, extinguishers,

emergency lighting and lift all pass their mandatory/annual inspections and are repaired/replaced as and when required.

The Trust's Environmental Policy states that the Management Committee will endeavour to use the minimum quantities of energy possible in accordance with the safe and efficient operation of its heating, lighting, and appliances. Periodically energy sources, energy using appliances and energy efficiency will be reviewed, with the aim of causing the lowest reasonably practicable environmental impact. To that end, it was identified that a wall mounted electric radiator used to warm the Lift hydraulic oil tank was not the most efficient method and probably consumed considerable electricity, even during the summer months. The Lift Maintenance Company Meridian explained an in-tank heater providing heat only when required. The cost for installation was £864.00.

### **Roofing and guttering.**

The Hall has been in constant use for 25 years and proves a popular and impressive venue for many activities. The Halls striking interior and lofty ceiling are much appreciated by many hirers. The exterior however is beginning to show its age – particularly the roof and guttering. Whilst clearing the gutters recently, our contractor reported rapidly deteriorating mortar tile fixings and damaged lead linings in the flashing of the twelve 'valleys'. The mortar debris can fall into the hoppers that lead to the hidden downpipes from the roof. Thankfully, there are very few signs of dampness or water leaks inside the building.

The Trustees have recently commissioned a reputable roofing contractor (Kevin Crane of O'Brien Roofing) to conduct a full survey of the roof area, with photographs, to provide recommendations for further work needed to give the roof another lengthy life of trouble-free existence.

### **Pummery Square**

Another necessary expense to be faced soon, will be to obtain a survey and quotation for the likely work needed to the trees in Pummery Square – in particular the areas at their bases where the tree and root growth has distorted both the tarmac and the metal grilles. These present clear trip hazards which should be addressed. (This quotation will probably be requested from Ford Civil Engineering Ltd, Small Works Division, who carried out similar work 10 years ago).

## **2.2 The Roles & Contributions of Volunteers**

The volunteer Trustees give much time helping to operate the Hall and bring a level of enthusiasm, expertise and commitment. Again this year, the Trustee covered Caretaking duties for several months when the weekend Caretaker was recuperating from an operation.

Contractors Wendy Gordon (Bookings Officer), Chris Platt and Mike Trafford (Caretakers) are all pivotal to the smooth running of the Hall. Without their efforts and commitment, it would not be possible for the Trustees to operate the Hall effectively. The Committee always receive very positive feedback from users of the Hall.

## **2.3 Looking Ahead**

Poundbury continues to grow, and maintaining the sense of community is becoming harder. The focus of the development is moving inexorably towards Queen Mother Square, Damers First School, Dorchester Community Church and the growth of housing in the North East Quadrant and Crown Square. The Trustees are working hard on increasing the visibility of the Brownsword Hall in local publications and media, however as most enquiries now come via the internet the importance of maintaining an attractive up to date website is paramount. The Trustees have therefore commissioned a new website from Maumbury Design to be launched in May 2025.

## **3. Financial Review**

### **3.1 Financial Position**

The Trustees are pleased to report the Hall has had good occupancy during the financial year and most available timeslots have been booked, however overall income is slightly down. The income

from Regular Users (which provide stable income for the Hall's running costs) was slightly down compared with previous years £22,292.00 compared with £24,065.00 in 2023/24, however that has been due to a few long standing organisations folding either due to lack of attendees or lack of volunteers willing to run the clubs. Of note a refund of £913.00 was made in this Financial Year, when the Parents and Toddler Group cancelled the remainder of their sessions.

The vacant timeslots have now been filled and occupancy has been very high since January 2025 with new activities such as Yoga, Choir, Bridge Club and an Art Class available for the public to attend. Private hire bookings have increased but more have been short hirings and have not generated as much income as previous years. There have been fewer Adult birthday parties due to the early closing time of 11pm due to noise pollution affecting local residents, however the Trustees have noted less wear and tear on the Hall's facilities requiring maintenance work.

Expenses have been closely monitored and controlled in line with income; direct costs such as Caretaking services are lower mainly due to a period when the Trustee covered caretaking duties (free of charge) while the weekend Caretaker was unwell. Utility costs remain very high and the Trustees continue to opt for the most energy efficient options for heat and light to minimise gas and electricity usage. Mandatory annual safety equipment testing and replacement makes up the majority of maintenance expenses.

The financial year closed with a slight deficit in cash flow of £2,139.00.

### **3.2 Details of Any Funds Materially in Deficit**

The Charity has no funds which are materially in deficit.

### **3.3 Policy on Reserves**

The Poundbury Village Hall Trust has three Reserves to use for short (day to day), medium and long term expenditure.

The Lloyds Current bank account is sufficient to cover the running costs and some minor additional expenses. However when significant expenditure (not covered by annual income) is required, monies from the Lloyds Savings bank account are transferred and are considered medium term/contingency reserve.

Large, long term maintenance projects, that cannot be funded from Hall Hire alone, have been identified within the Designated Funds of £30,000.00 (currently invested with St James Place and valued at £45,700) for example Lift rejuvenation, Hall roof repairs, Pummery Square resurfacing.

The Trustees review the peaks and troughs in day to day running costs and cash flow at the Committee Meetings. Cash flow often peaks in November and December where several organisations opt to pay the full 12months hire fees in advance and dips by August and September when annual large expenses are paid such as Insurance and fire safety and electrical and alarm systems are checked.

The Budget Working Group and Facilities Working Group collaborate on a "Wish List" for budgetary planning and capture the tasks/projects that are required immediately/in year, 2 to 5 years and 5+years and their risk or priority.

The decisions to proceed with projects over and above standard running costs and how they will be funded are discussed and voted on at the Management Committee meetings. Essential maintenance tasks are given priority followed by projects that will increase the Hall's facilities and potentially lead to additional Hall use.

### **3.4 Sources of Funding**

Income from Hall Hire is the main source of funding. Occasionally donations are received and minor contributions from businesses in Pummery Square.

### **3.5 Investments Policy**

As a result of the poor returns on savings accounts and having considered the options available, the Management Committee decided to place the Designated Reserve of £30,000 (earmarked for longer

term essential maintenance work) with Poundbury Wealth Management, part of St James Place, on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014 with a view to improving the long-term return on savings. The investment operates between Medium and Low risk; currently at Medium due to the successful investments in higher performance equities. To manage the investment we receive quarterly summaries of the financial position and hold regular, annual, reviews with the management team. Clearly any major adverse position identified in the quarterly reviews would be investigated and any significant changes discussed with Poundbury Wealth and the Trustees.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, the investment was valued at £45,700.00 and with five days' notice the funds can be made available.

### **3.6 Principal Risks Facing the Charity**

The Trust relies upon Regular Users (individuals/organisations that hire the Hall weekly/monthly) to fund the indirect costs incurred, whether the Hall is used or not. In this financial year some Regular clubs have ceased meeting, resulting in a slight fall in income. Should some of the main Regular Users stop using the hall, the reduced income would not cover the minimum running costs. The Bookings Officer works diligently to develop new enquiries and keeps in contact with the Hall's key customer base.

The Hall is now 25 years old and some of the building fabric and equipment (specifically Hall Roof, Lift, and Alarm System) requires more extensive, therefore more costly, repairs/replacement.

The Trustees intend to survey the Hall roof in the next financial year to better understand the potential maintenance/repair costs over the next 5 years.

Designated funds of £30,000 (currently invested with Poundbury Wealth Management) have been set aside to cover/contribute toward significant expenditure.

### **3.7 Remuneration of Trustees**

All Trustees act in a voluntary capacity and receive no remuneration or other material benefits from their services to the Charity.

Out-of-pocket expenses necessarily and reasonably incurred by Trustees are reimbursed at cost.

### **3.8 Statutory Statements on Liabilities**

The Trustees have committed to creating a new Website, having repair work carried out on the guttering and replacing fire extinguishers. These activities have been undertaken during March/April/May 2025 and will be invoiced/paid in the financial year April 2025 to March 2026.

## **4. Administrative Information**

### **4.1 Charity Name & Registration**

Name of the Charity: Poundbury Village Hall Trust

Charity No: 1086679

Registered with HM Revenue & Customs                      No

### **4.2 Charity's Principal Address**

Pummery Square, Poundbury, Dorchester DT1 3GW

**e-mail:** brownswordhall@gmail.com

**website:** www.brownswordhall.org.uk

### 4.3 Trustees

Name	Office	Appointed	Resigned	Appointed by
John Pearson	Chair	Aug 2021		AGM Attendees
Paul Master	Secretary	May 2018		AGM Attendees
Debbie Fitton	Treasurer	June 2006		AGM Attendees
Steve Souhami		May 2020		AGM Attendees
Gavin Skinner		Aug 2021		AGM Attendees
Mike Lawson		Aug 2021		AGM Attendees
Lesley Clark		June 2024	Dec 2024	AGM Attendees
Paul Clark		June 2024	Dec 2024	AGM Attendees

### 4.4 Bank

Lloyds Bank, High Street, Dorchester

### 4.5 Independent Examiner

Edwards & Keeping, High Street, Dorchester

## 5. Structure, Governance & Management

### 5.1 Governing Documents

Deed of Trust (21 Aug 2000), PVHT Policy and Management Procedures Guide.

### 5.2 Charitable Objects

The Brownsword Village Hall is for the use of the inhabitants of Poundbury and used for meetings, lectures and classes or other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation in the interest of social welfare and with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants.

The PVHT Management Committee of Trustees must ensure the building, undercroft and square are at all times kept in repair, sufficiently insured against all insurable risk including fire, theft and public liability and employer's liability insurance to cover the liability of the Trustees and Volunteers.

### 5.3 Statutory Declaration

The Trustees confirm that they have paid due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

### 5.4 Trustee Selection Methods

The Poundbury Village Hall Trust Deed states that all adult residents of Poundbury are members of this charity with voting rights. Up to twelve residents are elected as Trustees at the AGM for a period of three years and form a Management Committee. The Trust benefits from the wide variety of skills and experience.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf.

31/05/2025



Debbie Fitton (Treasurer)



## The Poundbury Village Hall Trust

### Statement of Financial Activity for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Receipts and payments – Unrestricted Funds		Current Year 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	Last Year 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024
Receipts	Notes	£	£
Hall Hire	1	28,112	33,579
Interest from Savings Account		178	200
Donations	2	150	0
Car Parking	3	0	150
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>28,440</b>	<b>33,929</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Utilities		8,672	8,018
Caretaking, Bookings Officer & Cleaning	4	16,682	19,717
Telephones & Wi-Fi	5	1,762	1,036
Maintenance, Safety & Security		1,141	6,106
Licences & Subscriptions		45	435
Insurance		2,131	2,428
Other		145	160
<b>Total payments</b>		<b>30,579</b>	<b>37,900</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>		<b>-2,139</b>	<b>-3971</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cash funds last year end</b>		<b>25,508</b>	<b>29,479</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>		<b>23,369</b>	<b>25,508</b>

#### Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

	Current Year 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	Last Year 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024
<b>Unrestricted Reserves - Cash</b>		
Current Account	6,496	8,812
Savings Account	16,873	16,695
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,369</b>	<b>25,508</b>
<b>Unrestricted Reserves - Designated Funds</b>		
St James Place Investment - <i>shown as at end of period valuation</i>	45,700	42,000

#### Notes

1. Hall Hire charges for Private/Charity events includes deposits which are refunded or partially refunded after the event. A refund of £910 was made to Parents & Toddlers, for a yearly fee received in the previous financial year.
2. A donation of £150 was gratefully received from surplus funds from the Poundbury Ladies Club
3. The Pummery Square Car Park can be hired for events e.g.: Farmers' Markets and Summer Concerts.
4. Caretaking costs are directly related to the number of hirings, plus the Trustees stood in (free of charge) for the weekend caretaker to cover a few months of sickness.
5. Wi-Fi was installed in the Hall in Nov 2023, so not a full year's cost in the previous financial year for comparison.